

**Abstract 241**

**TITLE:** Identifying Elements of Effective HIV Prevention Programs that Target Youth  
Disproportionately At-Risk

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**ISSUE:** Since the onset of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there has been a significant demographic change in the populations affected by the disease. What was once thought to be a disease that primarily affected White men who have sex with men is now known to be one that shows no discrimination with regard to sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender or age. Young people are being infected with HIV at a staggering rate. Recent statistics reveal that one-fourth of all new HIV infections occur in people under the age of 22, and one-half in people under the age of 25. AIDS is the sixth leading cause of death in people between the ages of 15 and 24. HIV prevention efforts which have been remarkably successful with previous "at-risk" populations have failed to reach these emerging "at-risk" populations. The rise in reported cases of HIV/AIDS among African-Americans, Hispanics and women, points to the need for proven, research-based prevention efforts that target these populations. Research has demonstrated that in order to be maximally effective, prevention efforts must be based on culturally and age-appropriate methods of communicating about HIV and AIDS. Efforts that target younger members of these populations that are disproportionately at risk can be particularly effective in reducing the current patterns of the disease.

**SETTING:** This document will be distributed to state education agencies.

**PROJECT:** The Council of Chief State School Officers has produced a document, which identifies elements of effective HIV prevention programs that target youth who are disproportionately at risk for HIV infection. This document describes characteristics of HIV education and prevention that work, and includes a set of recommendations for states that provides guidance about instituting research-based practices that target these young people.

**RESULTS:** CCSO had identified and discussed elements found to be successful when targeting particular groups. Recommendations to state education agencies based on these elements were provided.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Schools face unprecedented challenges as we approach the next century. Ever increasing pressure to provide an academically rigorous education for all children often leaves schools wondering how they can address anything else. However, HIV is killing our children and disproportionately affecting those children who are most at risk of academic failure. By providing leadership for effective, culturally specific HIV education, SEAs can help to assure that these young people can live to reap the benefits of their improved education.

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